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ABSTRACT

The Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) was intended to assist Ontario communities in comprehensive planning to meet the needs of adult learners requiring training in basic literacy and numeracy. In the first phase, 59 local LCPP committees and 4 literacy networks submitted community profiles to the Literacy Section of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board. Each profile described the social and economic context of the community, outlined existing literacy services, and identified residents' literacy needs. The profiles described a new social and economic climate that had a harsher effect on adults with limited literacy skills than on other groups. With the changing workplace and slow recovery of the economy, people who could previously do their jobs adequately now needed higher levels of literacy and numeracy. Adults sought literacy assistance primarily for reasons related to employment or to enhance their participation in the home and community. The adult learner in Ontario was able to choose programs offered by a range of providers: community-based groups, school boards, colleges, labor organizations, and employers. Barriers to participation were lack of transportation, lack of child care, and waiting lists for program entry. Underserved groups were adults with special needs and those with specific challenges such as rural residents, single mothers, and seniors. Gaps in coordination and integration as well as in adequate, consistent, and long-term funding were cited. (YLB)

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1993/94 Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) Profile Analysis

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary iii

Preface: The LCPP Process 1
A. Introduction 1
B. Background to Literacy Networking 1
C. The LCPP Activities 3

I. Profiles of the Communities and Their Needs 6
A. Economic and Social Context 6
B. The Impact on Adults With Literacy Needs 8
C. Avoiding a "Deficit Model" 9

II. The Existing Provision of Literacy Services 11
A. Common Features of Literacy Programming 11
B. A Diversified System 12
C. Social and Vocational Goals 14
D. Employment-Related Literacy 15
E. Partnerships Among Providers 17
F. Partnerships Beyond Literacy 19
G. Community-Wide Integration of Services 20

III. The Gaps in Literacy Provision 22
A. Barriers to Participation 22
B. Underserved Groups 26
C. Gaps in Local Literacy Systems 34

IV. Conclusion 40

Appendix A: LCPP Profiles Submitted: 1993/94 41

Appendix B: Literacy Networks 42

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of the Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) undertaken by literacy programs and services across Ontario in the fall and winter of 1993/94. The Literacy Section, Learning and Employment Preparation Branch initiated the LCPP to assist communities to engage in comprehensive planning to meet the needs of adult learners requiring training in basic literacy and numeracy.

As the first phase of what will be an on-going process, 59 local LCPP committees and four literacy networks submitted community profiles to the Literacy Section. Each profile described the social and economic context of the community, outlined the existing literacy services and identified the literacy needs of the residents. Many profiles also identified gaps in the existing provision of literacy services.

Overview

The 59 LCPP profiles described substantial economic and social change taking place in communities across Ontario. The major factors driving the change are the recent recession and its lingering aftermath, and structural changes like the adoption of new technologies in business, industry and the community.

The new social and economic climate is having a harsher effect on adults with limited literacy skills than on other groups. Employment, retraining programs, citizenship requirements, family and personal care, and the social services system are all demanding a greater level of literacy and numeracy skills.

With the changing workplace and the slow recovery of the economy, people who could do their jobs adequately before are finding that they need higher levels of literacy and numeracy. This is especially evident among displaced workers who are seeking retraining or upgrading after many years in the workplace.

While many adults seek literacy assistance primarily for reasons related to employment, others attend programs to enhance their participation in the home and community. Literacy providers are concerned that a balance be maintained between literacy for social and family goals, and literacy for vocational goals.

Some of the profiles point to a danger in the present economic and social environment of unwittingly stigmatizing adults who have limited literacy skills. It is important not to overemphasize the extent to which educational attainments, including literacy and numeracy skills, open doors to employment and community

participation. We also need to recognize the often substantial experiences, knowledge and abilities of the adults who lack such attainments.

The adult learner in Ontario is able to choose programs offered by a range of providers, including community-based groups, school boards, colleges, labour organizations and employers. Despite the diversity of funding and delivery models, the literacy programs in Ontario share certain fundamental characteristics. In particular, they give priority to meeting the needs and goals of learners and being responsive to the community in which they are located.

Developing a "seamless system" of literacy services for adults in each community requires a high level of collaboration. The LCPP profiles document a wide variety of successful partnerships in which providers are demonstrating a "community-wide" rather than narrowly organization- or sector-specific view.

Needs and Gaps

Fifty-four profiles identify significant barriers faced by adults to participation in literacy programs. They include:

- lack of means of transportation, or affordable transportation (42 mentions),
- lack of childcare (16 mentions),
- waiting lists for entry into programs (14 mentions), and
- other barriers: restrictive eligibility requirements, privacy concerns, costs or fees, lack of physical accessibility of programs, lack of special support services and understaffing.

Fifty-four profiles identify groups or communities which are presently unserved or underserved. These include:

- adults with special needs (23 mentions),
- communities which are underserved or have no literacy services at all (12 mentions),
- youth (10 mentions), and
- other groups: workers, rural residents, seniors, adults who need full-time programs, single mothers, newcomers, families.

In total, 46 of the 59 LCPP profiles identified gaps in the existing system of literacy provision at the local level. These are conditions which are experienced as obstacles by adults as they attempt to reach their personal education and training goals. The measures which will be required to bridge these gaps include:

- enhancements of literacy programs (22 profiles),
- adequate, consistent and long-term funding for literacy programs and services (19 profiles),
- shared terminology among providers regarding assessment, levels of achievement, and other functions and components of literacy services (8 profiles),
- better coordination among literacy programs and services in their communities (8 profiles), and
- other: outreach, information and referral; movement of students among programs; tracking and follow-up of students; recognition of the learning of literacy students; tutor support; involvement of the public and community organizations in supporting literacy; and professional development for literacy workers.

An On-Going Process

The Literacy Community Planning Process profiles represent the product of only one year out of what will be an on-going process of planning of literacy services in Ontario. In 1994/95, the committees will continue their work, focusing this time on particular gaps in literacy programming and coordination which have been locally identified as having the highest priority for action.

Preface: The LCPP Process

A. Introduction

The Literacy Section of OTAB initiated the Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) in the fall of 1993. The goal is to assist communities to share information, coordinate services and develop a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of adult learners who require training in basic literacy and numeracy services. It is an on-going process which is intended to connect with similar community planning initiatives in the education and training system, including that by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and eventually local boards.

There were 59 planning areas. Literacy providers defined the boundaries using criteria such as anticipated local board boundaries, the natural boundaries of existing communities, the boundaries of regional or local literacy networks, the county and regional municipality lines, manageability of size and similar factors. LCPP committees were composed of all OTAB-funded English literacy providers offering services in each of in the 59 areas. The overall coordination of the committees was undertaken by the 14 regional literacy networks and 6 local literacy networks. See Appendix B for a listing of these.

In various areas, additional partners participated in the work of the LCPP committees. These included literacy providers not funded by OTAB, other education and training providers, and various community organizations. For example, the public school boards of Metro Toronto took part, even though they are not funded by OTAB for their ABL/N activities. Many LCPP committees involved representatives of local Canada Employment Centres and made use of labour market studies from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). In some areas, Native literacy programs took part. (Francophone programs will undertake a separate LCPP process in 1994/95 under the auspices of the provincial work group established by the Francophone Literacy Program Unit of the Literacy Section.)

B. Background to Literacy Networking

The Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) is the latest example of what is a notable history of literacy networking in Ontario. A variety of networking and umbrella organizations has been active for many years, enhancing communication and collaboration within and beyond the literacy field.

For example, the 20 regional and local literacy networks which coordinated the LCPP count among their members representatives of programs from all provider sectors.

Networks themselves were an innovation of the Ontario literacy field, the first one having been established in the 1970's.

Other English literacy networking organizations and initiatives include the following:

- The school board ABL/N, college OBS, and community-based sectors in literacy have umbrella organizations for the purposes of consultation and joint action. These are respectively the Literacy Committee of the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA), the OBS Committee which reports to the Head of Access Committee of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (ACAATO), Laubach Literacy-Ontario (LLO), and Community Literacy Ontario (CLO). Aboriginal community programs are organized under the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition (ONLC). (Francophone community program also have their own coalition.)

- Workplace literacy and Multicultural Workplace (MWP) programs meet together from time to time, as do labour adjustment preparatory programs (LAPP).

- The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) is an organization with a broad, cross-sectoral membership of English literacy programs, services and participants. It is the umbrella organization for English literacy programs at the provincial level.

- Go/Goal Literacy for the Deaf (GOLD) is an umbrella organization which brings together Deaf literacy programs and participants in Ontario.

- The Ontario Literacy Communications Network, referred to as CoSy, links literacy programs and stakeholders such as OTAB together through computer conferencing and e-mail services.

- Literacy practitioners network about issues related to professional development and recognition through the Council for Literacy Worker Education (CLWE).

Much of the vital work of literacy networking goes on in groups of providers meeting regularly at the local level, most often in conjunction with the work of regional literacy networks. In some communities, the Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) provided one more activity for an already functioning local cross-sectoral body. For example, the London/Middlesex profile explains that providers in the London area have a long history of working together for adult education and literacy through the London Council for Adult Education. Currently, London literacy providers are organized as a local network affiliate of the Southwestern Ontario Adult Learning Network (SOALN). They carried on the LCPP work through this local literacy network which is also affiliated with the Council.

In other local communities, the LCPP built upon the work of a pre-existing networking body, but was responsible for adding a new dimension to it. For

example, the Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton-Wentworth--a regional network--coordinated the LCPP in its area. It made use of the opportunity afforded by the LCPP to broadly consult within the community. Core members of the LCPP committee

> took part in a community dialogue with other front line social service agencies in order to identify gaps in literacy services in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth.

In Sudbury, the LCPP was brought together by the local network, Sudbury Literacy Network, and was seen as the continuation of a process that had been going on for many years. This network had developed as a subcommittee of the Sudbury Educators and Trainers Network and the Social Assistance Recipients Coordinating Committee. However, the participants agreed that the LCPP had expanded the process by providing more networking time and by bringing in new partners, especially representatives of Human Resources Development Canada and a community action group, CANRAC, situated in Sudbury East.

Timmins providers report that the LCPP led to a more inclusive local networking process:

> Prior to our committee forming, there was a great deal of communication and cooperation between Timmins Learning Centre, PACE, and Futures but we were lacking the input from the college (Northern College). For this reason, we were happy to provide information to the college as well as receive in kind.

In still other communities, the Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP) was the occasion for the first cross-sectoral literacy provider meetings to be held there. In the Kapuskasing area, served by NEON, local literacy providers had not met as a group prior to the LCPP. Subsequent to the meetings, they are proposing to form a community advisory group for literacy and numeracy called Facilitators Literacy Action Group (FLAG).

C. The LCPP Activities

The work of the committees was to be carried out in four phases:

1. Establish a community profile and determine the needs of the community.
2. Determine the existing provision of literacy.
3. Determine the outstanding gaps and overlaps or duplication which may exist.
4. Establish planning and implementation strategies to address the gaps and overlaps and to determine evaluation criteria.

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The LCPP is seen as an on-going, spiralling process which moves from description (Phases 1 and 2), to analysis (Phase 3), to action and evaluation of the action (Phase 4), and then back to description again--of the new, changed context.

The Literacy Section recognized that communities varied widely in their starting points, and advised them that it was necessary to complete only Phases 1 and 2 in the 1993/94 meetings. The process has continued into the 1994/95 period, and communities have been asked to continue--from whatever point they reached--to address the subsequent phases.

It was felt that asking the volunteer committees to engage in elaborate data collection in Phase 1--establishing profiles of their communities--would divert them from moving on to the next, important steps of the planning process. For this reason, committees were asked initially to make use of the information at hand: the knowledge--personal or documentary--possessed by literacy providers, as well as local studies, reports and other information that pointed to the characteristics and needs of the community. The Literacy Section felt that this would be sufficient to initiate the planning process, and would be supplemented as time went on.

The Literacy Section committed to supplying data from the 1991 census, and has subsequently purchased a CD-ROM database disk from Statistics Canada. Data from it will be made available to the committees in the 1994/95 round of the LCPP.

The 1993/94 LCPP profiles were submitted to the Literacy Section in the spring of 1994. This included 59 LCPP committee reports and 4 regional network overviews of committee reports from their catchment areas.

All 59 LCPP committees addressed the first two phases--a profile of the community and its needs, as well as a picture of the existing literacy services. A total of 46 committees went on, sometimes in a quite preliminary way, to Phase 3--analysis of gaps and overlaps in the services in the community. Several submissions provided details of work on Phase 4--strategic action plans for addressing the identified gaps and overlaps.

The present report summarizes the 59 submissions from the LCPP committees, referred to here as "community profiles" or as "profiles." The 4 regional network submissions have been consulted for supplementary information, but are not summarized separately. The primary aim of the present report is to provide guidance to LCPP committees by giving them a means of comparing their situations, challenges and plans with those of other committees across the province.

Other readers might consider the present report as a snapshot of literacy provision in Ontario from the perspective of the delivery organizations in the field. However, these readers must understand that the picture is incomplete--a brief scan of a large and complex field.

Finally, the present report will introduce still others to the issues and concerns which were considered in the community planning process undertaken in the literacy field. It may provide some guidance to similar planning exercises in the education and training system.

The report is organized according to the three initial steps of the Literacy Community Planning Process:

I. **Profiles of the communities and their needs.**

II. **The existing provision of literacy services.**

III. **The gaps and challenges in literacy provision.**

IV. **Conclusion**

I. Profiles of the Communities and Their Needs

A. Economic and Social Context

The 59 LCPP profiles describe a process of sweeping, often wrenching economic and social change taking place in communities across Ontario. This process is driven by the recent recession and its lingering aftermath--including business closures or downsizing and the resulting toll of unemployment, underemployment and insecurity. However, cyclical factors are only part of the picture. The profiles point to enduring structural forces in the economy which are affecting all phases of community life in Ontario. These include:

- Long-term weakness in demand at the international level for primary sector products like minerals and pulp, forcing areas dependent upon primary sector employment to diversify their economies.

- A shift from manufacturing to service-based industry, accelerated in Ontario by the relocation of manufacturing activity to other countries in the wake of the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

- Decisions being made by business and industry to achieve productivity increases through heavy reliance on high technology, supported by higher skill requirements for employment.

- The move by many employers to achieve flexibility through greater resort to part-time, temporary and contract employees, as opposed to a permanent, full-time workforce.

In the face of these forces, many communities are undergoing erosion of their manufacturing base, with accompanying social dislocation. For example, providers report that for the Niagara region, "until very recently, its proportion of displaced workers has been the country's highest."

According to the literacy providers of Waterloo Region, the area is economically strong in relation to the rest of the province. Those people who are employed are doing better than they were in 1986. There is more full-time work and increased pay. However,

> unemployment rates...are much higher than they were in 1986. A large number of plants have closed in the area. Consequently, the number of people dependent on social assistance has greatly increased.

Northern communities like the South Temiskaming area have felt the dramatic effects of weak demand for resources on international markets. According to the literacy providers of the area,

> until the 1990's, South Temiskaming was a typical northern mining area. Two large mines...directly employed about 1,500 people. These mines and their employees were in return directly responsible for other services and employment thanks to the 'spin-off' effects provided by a large primary sector employer. When these mines closed in 1990, the resulting economic impact was devastating.

According to the area profile, the "real" level of unemployment in the area is now estimated to be at 40% or even higher. As in other communities, many adults represented in this figure have "fallen off" Unemployment Insurance onto General Welfare Assistance.

Restructuring and downsizing extends beyond the private sector. For example, North Bay literacy providers report that, "Many Crown Corporations and government organizations located in North Bay are down-sizing and re-deploying their workers to larger cities."

Superior North providers point to some of the disturbing effects of the economic restructuring process on individual welfare and family stability:

> Since the major downsizing of the Domtar Mill in Red Rock and the general uncertainty of the stability of the forest industry in the region, there have been some significant social changes felt throughout the entire region. There have been increases in the rates of suicide, family violence, vandalism, and substance abuse issues.

The economic changes are severely straining community stability. The providers of the rural counties of Bruce and Grey say that their communities are linked together by "a strong sense of a community struggling to keep the agricultural, small business and tourism industries alive, despite a declining economy."

Kenora-area providers report that the region is experiencing a significant demographic shift as people with higher levels of literacy skills and education are not able to find employment in the area and migrate from the community. Similarly, in the Kapuskasing area,

> workforce reductions and lack of new employment opportunities have particularly affected the young members of the workforce....The number of unemployed youth would be greater but a significant number have left the community in search of employment elsewhere. The youth that are staying are usually less educated and will need upgrading to secure long-term employment.

The examples of Kenora and Kapuskasing highlight the fact that while the impact of economic restructuring is affecting all sectors of the population, youth and adults with limited education and literacy and numeracy skills have been hit harder by these changes and have fewer options in responding to them.

B. The Impact on Adults With Literacy Needs

In their submission to the Ottawa-Carleton profile, People, Words and Change refer to the pressure on adults with limited literacy skills:

> The economic climate of the nineties has a harsher effect on adults with weak literacy skills. Employment, retraining programs, citizenship requirements, family and personal care, and the social services system all demand a greater level of literacy and numeracy skills. This trend will not reverse.

There has been a general increase in the literacy and numeracy demands of the workplace and the larger community.

1. The Workplace

According to the literacy profile from the Schreiber area,

> with the changing workplace and the slow recovery of the economy, people who could do their jobs adequately before are finding that they need higher levels of literacy and numeracy....This is especially evident among displaced workers who are seeking retraining or upgrading after many years in the workplace....Many employees facing layoffs perceive lack of education as a future challenge.

The Atikokan profile states that, "many jobs require the worker to be proficient in reading in order to read technical training manuals and safety procedures." The profile refers to a Conference Board of Canada finding that more than a third of Canadian companies report difficulties introducing new technology and training programs because many workers lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The need for increased literacy skills is particularly felt in "sunrise" industries, that is, areas of growth in local economies. For example, as mining employment has shrunk in the South Temiskaming area, the service sector has grown in importance. While there are at present few new jobs, the focus is now on the skills employees will need in the future in this emerging sector. These include skills in "customer service, health care, office and computer." All require relatively sophisticated functional literacy and numeracy skills.

Many South Temiskaming area miners who are now unemployed were hired at a time when educational requirements for employment were quite modest. Figures on

educational attainment for the area show that 18.8% of adult residents have less than grade 9 and 31.7% have not completed high school. To take advantage of future openings in the future service sector occupations, many of the unemployed in the South Temiskaming area will need to consider upgrading their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

However, basic skills are not enough for many employers. According to a majority of the 59 profiles, many employers are setting the possession of an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) as a prerequisite of employment. For example, the submission of the Wellington County Board of Education in the Wellington/Guelph profile states that a high school diploma "is becoming the minimum employment requirement for much of the industry in Guelph."

2. The Community

According to the LCPP profiles, some of the changes in community life which have accompanied the economic restructuring include:

- The application by all levels of government and business of new information technologies in community systems, making new learning demands on users.

- New approaches on the part of government in the field of social welfare, such as the programs aimed at supporting the entry of social assistance recipients into the labour market.

In its contribution to the Renfrew County LCPP community profile, the Generating Older Adult Learning Program (GOAL) observes that

> the level of technology has also advanced so rapidly that people are finding it very difficult to complete such tasks as doing their own banking, placing long distance calls on pay telephones, and reading bills.

Referring to a study in their area, the London/Middlesex profile reports that among social service recipients, "50% have only a 'poor' or 'fair' ability to read, write and work with numbers." These adults can be expected to have difficulty with the more sophisticated forms, procedures and demands of the social welfare system. As well, programs targeted at assisting them to enter or re-enter the job market must include strong supports for upgrading in literacy and numeracy.

C. Avoiding a "Deficit Model"

Some of the profiles point to a danger in the present economic and social climate of unwittingly stigmatizing adults who have limited literacy skills. On one hand, it is important not to overemphasize the extent to which educational attainments,

including literacy and numeracy skills, open doors to employment and community participation. On the other hand, we need to recognize the often substantial experiences, knowledge and abilities of the adults who lack such attainments.

The situation of adults with low educational attainment in the job market can be precarious. However, many adults with modest literacy levels continue to be employed, and with the help of workplace or part-time literacy programs, can stay abreast of the changes in their jobs.

Unfortunately, as the Kapuskasing profile observes, "Many times people with low literacy skills are denied employment opportunities for reasons unrelated to their abilities and other qualifications." Employers and others sometimes set educational requirements for jobs so high as to bear little relationship to the actual duties.

One LCPP profile suggests that the more sophisticated literacy demands in the community stem in part from the dense, jargon-laden text in public forms, pamphlets, signs, and other forms of print. They constitute barriers to access for adults, regardless of literacy level. The profile calls for clear writing by all organizations communicating with the public, governmental and non-governmental.

The Manitoulin profile provides an alternative to a "deficit model" of literacy--i.e., primarily focusing on the skills or attainments which individuals **lack**. The profile states that

> many older residents of Manitoulin had little opportunity for education beyond public school. Young women and men left early to raise families and to work on the farm, in the fishery or in the bush. Using a grade 9 certificate as a measure of literacy does not make sense to people who have acquired advanced skills despite little formal schooling. Manitoulin Literacy respects those achievements.

The approach of literacy providers as expressed in the Manitoulin profile is to remain centred on the needs and achievements of the learner. External economic or occupational requirements and demands are taken into consideration. However, adult students themselves are seen as the ultimate authorities on the directions and goals which are relevant for them. Based upon the choices which they make, they are assisted by staff of literacy programs to chart individualized learning plans which build upon their experience and knowledge.

II. The Existing Provision of Literacy Services

A. Common Features of Literacy Programming

Despite the diversity of the funding and delivery models, the literacy programs in Ontario share certain fundamental characteristics. Particularly, programs centre on the needs and goals of learners and are responsive to the communities in which the programs are located.

Together with OTAB, literacy sectoral and umbrella organizations incorporated these shared common principles in a set of quality standards for literacy programs. They are presented in the June, 1994 OTAB document, **Accountability Framework for the Adult Literacy Education System and Core Quality Standards for Programs**.

The themes of the Core Quality Standards are reflected throughout the LCPP profiles. For example, a number of profiles discuss the commitment of providers to responding to the needs of the adult learner. The staff of Hastings County Board of Education explain the approach taken in their programs:

> Some adults requiring literacy training had negative experiences in their early education, others require skills as a result of becoming unemployed and still others require on-going learning support due to disabilities. All adult learners, however, require a sensitive, supportive approach from facilitators.

This board strives to respond to the whole person, offering literacy, numeracy, life-skills and problem solving skills. It also provides counselling and referrals to their adult participants.

Providers of Waterloo Region point out that learning is individualized:

> This includes flexible time schedules, flexible entrance criteria and learner-centred programs to accommodate different peoples' needs.

Simcoe County providers point out that even where it is not a part of their formal program structure, "most agencies make referrals and/or advocate on behalf of their students for legal, health care, social and educational services."

B. A Diversified System

The literacy providers in the Kapuskasing area explain the importance of adults being able to choose their literacy learning setting:

> Adult learners are voluntary learners and they must be able to choose the starting place that is the most comfortable for them so that they can build self-confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, there must be a variety of providers of literacy, numeracy and training so that the learner can progress up the ladder to success, knowledge and employment.

The picture which emerges from the LCPP community profiles is in fact one of diversity and variety in the literacy delivery systems at the local level.

The five main OTAB funding programs and the provider sectors which take part in them include the following:

Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy (ABL/N), delivered by 78 public and separate school boards in Ontario. (The additional ABL/N programs delivered by 6 of the 7 Metro Toronto public boards are supported by local property taxes and not by OTAB.)

The instruction in ABL/N is one-to-one, in small groups or in classes. It provides instruction for adults in basic literacy and numeracy to a level equivalent to that of elementary school, but adhering to the principles of adult education. It is offered in schools and through partnership with community agencies and organizations. ABL/N easily articulates with the credit system of secondary schools.

Ontario Basic Skills (OBS), delivered by the 23 community colleges.

OBS is an upgrading program for adults whose functional literacy and numeracy skills are less than a grade 12 level, and who wish to prepare for further training or improve their chances of getting a better job. Colleges offer other non-OTAB-funded programs like Basic Training for Skill Development (BTSD). OBS is offered at college sites and at community locations, often through local partnerships.

Ontario Community Literacy, provided by community-based programs.

Community-based literacy organizations are normally small in scale. Their programs take place in informal settings such as storefronts, community centres, libraries and social service agencies. Instruction is normally offered one-to-one and in small groups, often delivered by or with the assistance of trained volunteers. The programs emphasize close connection to the local community through a board or advisory committee made up of community residents, and through involvement of learners in every phase of the program.

Some groups use the Laubach method. According to the Prescott-Russell Reading Program (Tri-County and Prescott-Russell), it is a "phonics-based method" with its own structure, training provision and materials. This means that if a student moves from one area to another, she/he can enter another program with the same materials and approach. There are 40 Laubach councils in Ontario.

Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace (OBSW) training, provided in two streams:

- Labour-initiated stream, delivered by three major union organizations. These include the Hamilton and District Labour Council, The Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region, and the Ontario Federation of Labour's Basic Education and Skills Training (BEST). (BEST is offered province-wide.) These programs develop individual skills and collective abilities.

- Employer-initiated stream, delivered by employer associations and non-profit agents like school boards, colleges and community-based groups, as well as individual employers.

Labour Adjustment Preparatory Programs (LAPP), delivered by local literacy networks and providers--community colleges, community-based programs and school boards.

Labour adjustment grants fund the assessment and preparatory training of workers who are laid off or are under notice of lay-off in situations involving the Office of Labour Adjustment's Adjustment Advisory Service. They also fund the coordination of this training through a regional network of deliverers in heavily populated areas.

One additional provider of literacy programming is not funded by OTAB--the Independent Learning Centre (ILC). It is part of the Ministry of Education and Training, and offers non-credit and credit-bearing correspondence courses. Currently, it provides study in basic literacy and adult basic education up to the grade nine level.

Regional literacy networks are key participants in every LCPP area. There are 20 OTAB-funded networks. Fourteen are regional networks which together span the whole province. Six are local networks, which serve larger urban areas, supplementing the work of the regional networks in whose catchment areas they are located. (See Appendix B for a list of networks.) Among their many roles in support of literacy delivery in Ontario, networks are responsible for coordinating much of the Literacy Community Planning Process (LCPP).

C. Social and Vocational Goals

Many profiles note that employers, governments and the public are increasingly convinced of the importance of a literate workforce. Literacy providers welcome this new awareness. However, many fear that the other motives for seeking literacy assistance, which are not directly economic, might be overlooked or devalued.

The providers of Bruce-Grey point out that while literacy needs currently revolve around job readiness and computer skills, still "there is a need to improve basic skills to function within the home and participate in the community."

The providers of Hamilton-Wentworth warn that

> literacy practitioners will be challenged to maintain a balance of perspective as pressure is exerted to give higher priority to vocational goals in serving the literacy needs of Hamilton-Wentworth.

In the words of the Lanark County Reading Network,

> literacy is not a skill isolated from other areas of life. Low literacy skills affect the student's work, health, children and family, self-esteem and the community.

It is felt that literacy programs must address all of these concerns if they are to serve the needs of the community.

Two surveys of literacy students (reported in the profiles from Hamilton-Wentworth and Frontenac County) report that adults enrol in programs for a range of reasons, of which preparation for employment is just one. Students indicated in the surveys that they enrol just as often for reasons like achieving personal satisfaction, participating more fully in the life of their families and communities, and enhancing the quality of their lives.

The Tri-County and Prescott-Russell LCPP profile identifies the motivations of adults who enrol in the T.R. Leger Alternative School Adult Literacy/Numeracy Programme. One motivation is squarely in the domain of lifelong learning:

> Many adults hear about the literacy programme from their friends and relatives who are participating in the course. They register simply for the pleasure of learning in the company of others.

The literacy providers of the South Temiskaming area help adults "to become more active members of the community." They consider this goal equal in importance to preparing them for employment. This community participation can include being members of social clubs or parents' groups, helping children with homework or finishing high school.

The South Temiskaming profile states that "these needs are just as valid and important as those of the workforce, and must not be forgotten."

D. Employment-Related Literacy

Providers in North Algoma report a heavier demand for employment-related training on the part of adults in their region than has been the trend for the past five years:

> As employers increase their job entry education level, as jobs disappear (particularly in primary industry - logging and mining), people want to enter into the new economy and so must start to upgrade to realize that goal.

The Niagara Region profile observes that the transition set in motion by unemployment involves significant personal stress and upheaval. Because of their learner-centred, flexible approaches, literacy programs are ideally suited to assisting adults with these issues:

> It is well known that in the motivational hierarchy, the more basic needs of safety and self assurance must be addressed before effective learning can take place. Broad based literacy then encompasses all of these.

The providers of the Sault Ste. Marie area assert that "literally thousands" of Ontario adults have been able to enter or re-enter the workforce "as a direct result of their having been able to access continuing education programs," including literacy and numeracy.

Adults are increasingly finding programs which are especially designed to meet their needs. For example, Georgian College, which has specially implemented programs in the Bruce-Grey area, is demonstrating that "training programs can be customized and delivered in alternative ways in order to meet clients' needs."

The Elgin County Roman Catholic Separate School Board has established a new Centre for Life Long Learning in Aylmer, with a computer lab and a range of individualized supports which can assist adults to prepare for employment.

Kingston Literacy, a community-based program, has developed a range of programs which are relevant to employment. They include: 1. One-to-one tutoring; 2. Small group learning for 4-9 participants; 3. Labour Adjustment courses: Literacy Upgrading for Skills Retraining, Individual Literacy Upgrading for General Skills Retraining, Introduction to Computers and 5. Family Literacy.

Literacy providers are increasingly developing partnerships with business to provide workplace programs. These programs can assist employees to improve their basic skills and help them stay in step with changes in the workplace. For example,

Abitibi Price Inc., the major employer in Iroquois Falls, encourages employees to upgrade, and provides educational opportunities for them to do so. Northern College provides a course in upgrading to a grade 12 equivalency at the mill. Many employees have chosen to attend evening classes. According to the Iroquois Falls LCPP profile, "Abitibi's vision is to have everyone obtain a grade 12 education by the year 2000."

The 59 community profiles reflect a strong concern on the part of Ontario literacy providers help adults deal with the immediate devastating consequences of layoff and job loss. As well, literacy providers are joining community-wide efforts to encourage and assist in the development of future employment prospects for residents.

According to the Sturgeon Falls LCPP profile, the closing of the MacMillan-Bloedell mill led to the formation of the West Nipissing Action Committee. It represented all sectors: social, educational--including literacy--health, economic and political. The committee worked on a development strategy and drafted a five year plan. It concentrated on the promotion of the area as a year around tourist attraction. Because of the involvement of literacy providers in the cross-sectoral partnership, literacy issues were incorporated as a foundation element of the economic development strategy of the community.

The LCPP profiles point to a number of "sunrise"--that is, emerging--industries. For example, Lambton County providers report new jobs in their area in commission sales, telemarketing and services--jobs which often require customer service skills and higher literacy skills than the manufacturing jobs which are disappearing. However, the Lambton profile observes that the majority of the jobs are low-paying, part-time or seasonal.

Other areas report opportunities in new, higher paying industries. The Oxford/Elgin providers say:

> Oxford and Elgin County has a large agricultural base but it is changing to an urban manufacturing base. Employers are demanding higher levels of English and Mathematics to meet their technological structures.

In Durham Region, future training priorities, tied to growth areas of local economy, include programmable logic controls, golf course mechanic, building maintenance mechanic and stonemasonry. The providers say that, "Of these, none appear to be possible without functional literacy, most requiring a secondary school diploma for entry."

In Hamilton-Wentworth, local planning studies have identified growth sectors: environmental industry, advanced manufacturing, tourism and health care products

and services. The area LCPP profile states: "Economic expansion in these areas will depend crucially on education and training."

Community support for upgrading opportunities is critical in assisting adults to take advantage of new opportunities like those in Oxford and Elgin Counties, Durham Region and Hamilton-Wentworth. However, this support is not always forthcoming. According to one LCPP profile, "Businesses in the community still do not consider education and training a priority." They are referring to a Chamber of Commerce poll of businesses in which education and training was ranked fifth in terms of community priorities.

The 1994/95 training priorities of the Ottawa CEC Advisory Committee on Training place literacy in a top position:

1. Computers,
2. Literacy, numeracy, and upgrading
3. ESL/FSL

The Ottawa LCPP profile points out that "softer skills" beyond generic academic ones are also being emphasized. These are

> skills that focus on personal management and teamwork and include items such as having a positive work attitude, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills, and being able to deliver good customer service.

Similarly, in Schreiber, a survey of local businesses showed that 16% of employees need skill upgrading. Among the skills shortages are "cross trades/multi skills; service and hospitality skills," and the additional skills of "team building, interpersonal, problem solving and conflict resolution."

The Waterloo Region profile points out that these new skills are increasingly in demand "with the shift from manufacturing to a service-based economy."

E. Partnerships Among Providers

Each provider sector possesses unique resources and capacities to deliver programming. For example, in Renfrew County,

> because of the rural nature of the County, and because of the remoteness and relatively small size of the communities involved, the Board of Education is often the only organization in these areas with the potential in terms of infrastructure, resources and professional staff, capable of offering educational and/or training programs.

In areas such as rural Renfrew County--including isolated areas of the North--a single provider may deliver the only literacy programming. However, more often there are two or more providers in an area and the challenge is to meet the needs of adults in their area through partnerships--utilizing the strengths of each provider.

Successful collaborations among provider sectors require flexibility in adapting services to meet identified needs and in taking a "community-wide" rather than narrowly organization- or sector-specific view. The LCPP profiles report many successful partnerships.

An example of a school board/college collaboration involves the Peterborough County Board of Education and Sir Sandford Fleming College. They jointly provide a full-time literacy program. The school board provides fifteen hours of instruction per week and the college provides ten hours. According to the Peterborough profile: "This program is enabling students to progress to higher levels of literacy training more quickly and to be more successful when they get there."

The START program, a community-based literacy service of the Unemployed Help Centre in Windsor, offers a program in cooperation with St.Clair College--an on-site Ontario Basic Skills small group at levels I and II, equivalent to grades 1 to 8.

The Victoria County profile describes cross-sectoral cooperation encompassing all local providers:

> The three main literacy providers of Victoria County attempt to provide clients with choices so that learning can be facilitated most readily.

Literacy Outreach, the community-based program, serves adults wishing to achieve a grade eight education. The Victoria County Board of Education attracts those who want an education over grade eight and up to grade twelve or OAC level. The College appeals mainly to those clients who are interested in college preparation and equivalency for college entry. These providers present one example of their collaborative effort:

> The Board of Education and Literacy Outreach jointly offer one-to-one literacy. These two providers are also involved in referral. A small class program is offered by the Board of Education in the evening to adults on referral from Outreach Literacy.

In Metro Toronto, displaced workers who qualify can get a worker-centred assessment and go to one of four storefront training centres to upgrade their skills. The programs are delivered by community college or local school board instructors, with the assistance of volunteers from community-based organizations. The service is operated by the regional literacy network, the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy.

The Ontario Federation of Labour BEST program favours fostering what it calls *"ecological diversity" in program delivery. It refers to its collaboration with school* boards and colleges:

> BEST works well at the introductory levels where workers brush up on their skills and confidence. In some workplaces we have established collaborative relationships with the boards of education or colleges, where they do not compete with us to provide 'introductory' programs, but instead offer the credit and higher skill level programs which they, as educational institutions, are uniquely suited to do. This results in a broader range of opportunities for the workers. We would like to establish more such collaborative arrangements.

In BEST's view, where providers avoid competitive marketing, programs can complement one another and collectively meet a broader range of needs.

F. Partnerships Beyond Literacy

Many literacy providers are expanding their collaboration beyond the literacy field to include other community agencies and services. For example in Toronto, St. Christopher House found that it had not had success in meeting the literacy needs of people who are experiencing homelessness. For this reasons it is working with two drop-ins, Sistering and the Meeting Place, in cooperative programming.

Also in Toronto, Harambee Centres Canada aims to "facilitate the successful integration of the Anglophone and Francophone Black and Caribbean people in the mainstream of Canadian society." It wishes to avoid duplicating existing social services programs:

> Where the need exists, Harambee Centres Canada is committed to sharing its programs and services with other visible minority groups...including...community development, as well as for adaptation and settlement programs, and research initiatives.

In Frontenac County, the Open Book family literacy program of Frontenac-Lennox and Addington RCSSB and Kingston Literacy family literacy programs are both partners in a Better Beginnings project site, an initiative of the Ministry of Education and Training.

G. Community-Wide Integration of Services

One profile points to a community in which services are not well coordinated:

> There is a proliferation of adult basic education provided in the community. Boards of Education, Community-Based Literacy, private trainers and the College all offer basic education and this sometimes confuses the client as to what service to access.

Several communities have responded to situations like this by moving to some form of community-wide integration--even rationalization--of literacy services.

Often this is done under the auspices of one of the 14 regional or 6 local literacy networks. For example, the Literacy Alliance of North Bay is a local network which provides information, assessment and referral assistance to adults seeking literacy help. As part of this role, it operates a centralized intake service. Potential literacy students are referred by social agencies, continuing education programs, advertising and 'word of mouth'. According to the North Bay profile,

> the client meets with the co-ordinator and an academic skills assessment is completed. Together, the client and the co-ordinator discuss which community program would be best suited to the client's needs.

The Board of Directors of the Alliance include the service providers in literacy. Together, they work on gaps and needs in the community.

In Lanark County, the three main providers of adult literacy in Lanark County are Algonquin College, under the Ontario Basic Skills (OBS) program, the Lanark County Reading Network, a community-based program, and the Lanark County Board of Education. In the words of the LCPP profile,

> all three programs work closely together to provided adult learners in this county with a meshed system that is intended to close the gaps and address the learning levels and styles of all participants.

The profile describes how a student having difficulty in either the Ontario Basic Skills program or the Lanark County Board of Education Adult Literacy program can go on to receive one-to-one help with the Lanark County Reading Network. "This can be arranged with a telephone call and a visit to their centre." A student from the Reading Network who is ready to move on can attend a board of education class. A student in the OBS program having difficulty can switch to the board program. "A participant with the board program who reaches a level of grade 9 is encouraged to register at Algonquin College or the LCBE Alternative High School."

The providers of Lambton County have developed an ambitious approach to seamless services for learners. Since 1993, the providers--college, public and separate boards, and community based program--have been meeting monthly "to provide a unified front for the cause of literacy." Under what is called the "cooperative model," the providers have specialized their offerings so as to eliminate overlap, and have integrated volunteer coordination and promotion for the entire county under a single coordinator.

Lambton providers have addressed duplication with their cooperative model. However, they caution,

> this does not mean that we can 'survive' with reduced levels of funding. On the contrary, by working more efficiently, an effective program and outreach campaign combined with the present economic reality continues to attract new learners.

The plea of Lambton providers is that literacy services be integrated and rationalized for the benefit of existing and potential adult learners, and not simply as a cost-reduction exercise.

III. The Gaps in Literacy Provision

In total, 54 of the 59 LCPP profiles identified gaps in the existing system of literacy provision. They are conditions which are experienced as obstacles by adults as they attempt to reach their personal education and training goals. The gaps are presented here in three categories:

A. **Barriers to participation**

B. **Underserved groups and areas**

C. **Gaps in local literacy systems.**

Table 1: Barriers to Participation

Table 1: Barriers to Participation

(54 of 59 profiles mentioned barriers)

Barrier	Number of Mentions
1. Lack of transportation	42
2. Lack of childcare	16
3. Waiting lists	14
3. Restrictive eligibility requirements	9
4. Privacy/confidentiality	5
5. Costs or fees associated with study	5
6. Lack of physically accessible programs	3
7. Special support services lacking	3
8. Understaffing	2
9. Other	4

A. Barriers to Participation

Barriers to participation include those conditions which obstruct or prevent students from entering or remaining in literacy education. Table 1 presents a summary of the references made in the 59 community profiles to such barriers. Some of these barriers are discussed below.

City of Toronto literacy providers call upon funding bodies to acknowledge the importance of what it calls the "stabilization needs" of adults:

> City of Toronto literacy providers believe that effective literacy programs must first address the stabilization needs of adult learners prior to addressing their learning needs. Therefore, the social needs of learners and the provision of aid such as childcare, transportation, advocacy and referral services are acknowledged. All these efforts combine to create and foster a supportive learning environment.

The stabilization need most frequently cited by the literacy providers of Ontario is that of transportation. Fully 42 LCPP profiles, or 80%, identify lack of means of transportation, or affordable transportation, as a significant barrier to participation in literacy programs.

1. Lack of Transportation

One deterrent to use of existing transportation services is cost. North Bay providers say that

> isolation in the North is an increasing challenge for the economically disadvantaged. The present recessionary times have produced a marked decrease in travel services such as the decrease in the number of buses, and the increase in the costs of travel tickets.

In many other areas, public transportation systems either do not exist, or are very inadequate. In the Guelph/Wellington profile, it is pointed out that many of the residents of rural Wellington County have difficulty accessing their services as they may not have transportation. The Wellington County Literacy Council attempts to address this by offering to go to the participant's or tutor's home, or by arranging transportation.

Where transportation lines exist, transportation subsidies will reduce the barrier to participation in literacy. For example, Waterloo providers state that with the rise of unemployment rates and social assistance rolls, "some organizations have responded to the change by introducing financial aid for transportation and child care expenses."

In areas without public transit infrastructure, other solutions will be necessary. One of these is distance education. According to the Superior North profile,

> the need for people to have to leave their home and community in order to obtain upgrading or retraining puts a tremendous strain on the family unit. The future requires that the agencies that provide these services bring them to the community. Distance education and the means to provide this service to isolated communities and the people living there need to be addressed.

2. Lack of Childcare

A total of 16 profiles, or 30%, point to lack of childcare, or affordable childcare, as a significant barrier for participation of adults in programs. This is frequently associated with lack of transportation.

The North Bay LCPP profile points out that the group hit hardest by lack of affordable child care are sole support parents with young children, mainly women, and geographically isolated people:

> In order for people to participate in literacy upgrading our community needs affordable child care and an improved transportation network.

The profile from the Atikokan area recalls that in 1992, the Social Indicators Project indicated that the lack of public transportation and the lack of child care facilities created barriers for people accessing the literacy program. This situation has not changed.

3. Waiting Lists

Fourteen profiles refer to waiting lists for entry into programs as a significant barrier to participation in literacy. This issue is considered in the section "Adequate, Consistent and Long-Term Funding" under "Gaps in Local Literacy Systems," below.

4. Restrictive Eligibility Requirements

Nine LCPP profiles raise the issue of restrictive eligibility requirements as a barrier to participation in literacy. For example, according to the Peel Region providers, "Fee paying programs bar access to those who are subsisting on Unemployment Insurance or Social Assistance." On the other hand, Unemployment Insurance and social assistance "have job search components which often preclude regular school attendance."

The Superior North profile observes that colleges offer various technological and administrative courses, but adults with limited education have no way of accessing

these programs. "Families still have to be fed. Bills still have to be paid." The patterns of study permitted by training programs are not flexible enough:

> People in this area have to take short term work as it becomes available. Retraining and upgrading programs need to recognize this major concern by allowing the adult learner the freedom to take employment and to upgrade when not working to better prepare themselves for the courses already offered in the system.

The providers of Superior North go on to assert that

> the majority of gaps in service occur primarily because of rigid guidelines on participants. Perhaps in larger centres these types of eligibility criteria work better because a program can refer someone to another service if the person falls outside their mandate. This region, however, does not have the variety of services commonly found in larger centres.

The Superior North providers argue for more generic types of services, with fewer restrictions on eligibility.

The providers of Simcoe County add that the program guidelines accompanying funding for training are often unrealistic:

> Those who do choose to retrain need help in learning how to learn and are quite often expected to gain the appropriate level of proficiency within unrealistic specified periods of time or with minimal instruction.

Table 2: Underserved Groups

Table 2: Underserved Groups

(54 of 59 profiles listed groups)

Groups	Number of Mentions
Adults With Special Needs	
Persons with learning disabilities	7
Learners with special needs (unspecified)	6
Persons with developmental challenges	5
Persons with physical challenges	5
Other Groups	
Underserved communities	12
Youth	10
Workers	10
Rural residents	9
Seniors	8
Adults needing full-time programs	7
Single mothers	7
Newcomers	7
Families	5
Native/Aboriginal adults	3
Adults needing ILC support groups	2
Social assistance recipients	2
Adults unable to enter the workforce	1
Homeless and street people	1
Socially isolated adults	1
Women	1
Other	4

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B. Underserved Groups

Table 2 summarizes the references which profiles made to groups who are presently unserved, or underserved, in the present literacy system. Some of these are discussed below.

In total, 23 profiles pointed to gaps in the services literacy deliverers are able to provide to adults with special needs. Of these, 6 referred to the general category of "special needs," and the remaining 17 referred to specific challenges.

1. Adults With Learning Disabilities

The Fort Frances profile states that "there are many students in the district with specific learning problems." The profile goes on to suggest that many of them are students who began grade nine in a basic program, but who have now discontinued their education.

In total, 7 profiles indicate that local providers lack the capacity to adequately assist adults with learning disabilities. Durham Region providers say:

> All programs try to help students with learning disabilities, but recognize that we lack the resources for diagnostic testing and specialized program planning.

The Durham providers observe that the programs in the community, "are generally poorly equipped to handle students with more pronounced learning difficulties."

2. Persons With Developmental Challenges

Five profiles describe the services they provide to adult literacy learners with developmental challenges, and argue for stable and adequate resources to continue serving them.

The Renfrew County Board points out that adults with developmental challenges need skills to live on their own within the community as well as maintenance programs "to help them keep the skills they would lose if they could not use them on a regular basis."

As described in the Frontenac County profile, Kingston Collegiate Institute and Kingston Psychiatric Hospital offer programs for learners with mental and developmental challenges:

> The program targets adults with special needs who live in the community with their parents, in group homes, in hospitals, or semi-independently. The goal of the program is to teach them literacy/numeracy skills which will have a practical application in the community, empowering them to function independently.

Also in Frontenac County, the North Frontenac Literacy Program offers "a fully integrated program to serve the developmentally challenged residents of the community."

3. Learners with Physical Challenges

Among the five profiles which pointed out gaps in services for learners with physical challenges, two discussed adults who are Blind and Deaf.

In the Ottawa-Carleton area, the CNIB, Literacy for Deaf-Blind Adults Program states that, "The community defines itself socially as deaf-blind. It uses Deaf-Blind Services (DBS) for intervention, literacy, and recreation."

The Hamilton-Wentworth profile states that

> it is important to draw particular attention to the needs and difficulties with access experienced by the adult students in the CNIB, Deaf-Blind Services.

The Deaf-Blind Services have an urgent need for day care as well as one-to-one volunteers trained in American Sign Language, Signing Exact English, tactile sign language, finger spelling and two-hand manual signing. They also need additional equipment.

The Hamilton-Wentworth profile highlights a need for attention to the needs of Deaf immigrant learners who wish to learn English, but who cannot benefit from existing ESL classes. So much of ESL study depends upon oral communication, whereas Deaf students rely exclusively on visual cues.

The Niagara Region profile identifies a series of physical and other challenges which require more attention. These include "speech impaired, acquired brain injury, autistic, epileptic, psychiatric/neurological, dually diagnosed, and fragile/medical."

4. Underserved Communities

The LCPP profiles single out for special mention 12 communities which are underserved or have no literacy services at all. These include:

- Ajax-Pickering
- Amherstburg
- Balmertown
- Bowmanville
- Cambridge
- Durham Region - northern part
- East York, especially Thorncliffe Park
- Essex

- North Middlesex
- Rexdale
- Scarborough - north of 401, east of McCowan
- Weston.

These communities vary from isolated rural regions to neighbourhoods in the heart of urban areas. The profiles call for joint action between providers and funders to address these gaps.

5. Youth

The unmet needs of youth for appropriate literacy services are addressed in 10 LCPP profiles. The economic situation in Ontario is a powerful factor here, particularly for youth who have dropped out of school. For example, The Superior North profile explains that it has been a common practice in that area for many years for young men to drop out of school at 16 or 17 and go to work at a mill. However,

> these jobs are now gone and the youth have had to come to grips with the reality that post-secondary education is necessary for any type of employment.

This is difficult when there is no precedent for it in the family, and the parents have not planned for it financially and "they themselves may be struggling to make ends meet."

The Kenora profile points to the difficulties many young men face:

> We have many young men...who have not achieved in school in the past. Many of these young men have learning problems/perception difficulties that weren't identified when they were in school.

Now, many of these youth need to learn to read at higher levels for their jobs.

In Peterborough County, there are many high school graduates with a Basic Diploma who have similar problems:

> They have grade twelve and do not technically require literacy as defined by the Ministry. However, it is obvious that whatever training they take will need to be at the literacy level. In many cases, people in basic classes are there because of learning disabilities or developmental problems which make it difficult for them to acquire strong literacy skills.

The Peterborough County profile explains that there are no programs currently available there in which youth who fall in this category can receive training. Similarly, Durham Region and several other areas report that there are few services addressing the literacy needs of youth 16 to 19 who dropped out of school.

6. Workers

Ten profiles note gaps in literacy programming related to employment. Of them, 6 refer to literacy programs in the workplace and 4 to the needs of workers, whether employed and unemployed.

The profile from Peel Region identifies one reason why there are too few workplace programs:

> Workplace programs find employers are often reluctant in recessionary times to make the basic monetary commitment to ensure a literate functional workforce.

Scarborough and East York literacy providers identify a general lack of resources for workplace and employment-related literacy programs:

> Employment-related literacy programs, whether through community agencies or in the plants themselves, are increasingly needed - at the same time that resources to provide them are declining.

Providers in Bruce-Grey refer to the impact on adults:

> For many people starting training initiatives or seeking further education, they are realizing literacy upgrading is their first step. Yet, those wanting to upgrade their skills are facing long waiting lists and understaffed programs.

In North Timiskaming, the Municipal Welfare Department found that those on General Welfare Assistance (GWA) who lack schooling are hampered by a lack of accessibility to required training. There are often not enough training seats in literacy and basic education, and there is often a lack of funds for training while supporting a family or oneself.

7. Rural Residents

Nine profiles discuss the need for improved services to rural areas.

In Niagara Region, providers point out the need for a mechanism for identifying and accessing the "hidden client" in rural areas. The London/Middlesex profile expands upon this theme. It says that traditional social assistance and unemployment statistics are not helpful when applied to rural areas:

> Many farmers are self-employed and cannot apply for UI when they lose their farms. Rural residents do have frequent contact with social assistance agencies that maintain statistical information....In order to increase the accessibility of the programs, it is essential for providers to become more aware of what the actual needs are of the community.

The London/Middlesex providers suggest a needs survey to address the concerns of the rural community.

Other LCPP profiles discuss the types of services which are required to adequately address the needs of rural areas. Waterloo providers say that

> rural outreach programs must be as broad and as extensive as possible, ensuring that those in relatively isolated areas are aware of the literacy programs available.

Providers in Lennox and Addington County argue for adult education that caters to rural learning. "Direct services need to be provided through alternative and creative means."

Regional services often translate into 'no services' in rural areas, according to Niagara Region providers. They suggest various approaches, including "partnership storefronts" and "incentives for delivery of satellite programs to rural areas." Since more consciousness raising is required among rural populations, "A longer lead time must be acknowledged for rural programs to show a measure of success."

The providers of Frontenac County state that "there are inherent differences in delivering rural and urban literacy programs," in areas such as funding for services, including transportation, daycare, employment start-up, and educational resources.

8. Seniors

In many areas described in the LCPP profiles, seniors constitute a growing segment of the population. A total of 8 profiles argue for the need for increased services to them. According to the Carleton Separate School Board in the Ottawa-Carleton profile, they need stronger literacy skills for tasks like

> finances (taxes); household problems (reading labels, small print, legal agreements); communication with grandchildren (card-writing); (and) articulation of memoirs.

In general, seniors need literacy programs to help them cope with an increasingly complex society. They still desire to learn new things and are living longer but coping with poor health and less money.

As also reported in the Ottawa-Carleton profile, the Carleton Board of Education offers seniors programs in nursing and retirement homes:

> The objective of this program is to provide stimulation by encouraging self-expression or verbalization using basic literacy and numeracy skills. This provides for personal enrichment and fulfilment, which in turn help to enhance self-worth and quality of life.

9. Adults Who Need Full-Time Programs

Seven profiles point to the need for more full-time literacy programs, particularly for adults who are collecting Unemployment Insurance or Workers Compensation Board benefits.

Under the rules of these forms of assistance, the adult may pursue literacy and upgrading only if enrolled in literacy or upgrading for a minimum of 25 hours per week. However, most literacy programs are presently part-time. The exception is Ontario Basic Skills as offered in colleges, but not all OBS programs offer Levels I and II, the levels which correspond to basic literacy study.

Other adults require full-time study in literacy to make rapid progress toward their goals. For example, many adults choose to work toward high school credit and an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

10. Single Mothers

In many areas, single mothers form a sizeable group. In the Ottawa-Carleton profile, the Ottawa Board of Education reports that 18% of students in Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language are heads of sole parent families.

Seven profiles point to a lack of sufficient programs to meet the needs of single mothers. The Fort Frances profile describes their situation. Many have left school early, and are on some form of social assistance. The profile says, "It will be very difficult for these women to continue their education in a traditional fashion."

11. Newcomers

Seven LCPP profiles indicate that theirs are favoured settlement areas for newcomers, and that this is placing demands upon literacy programs.

Literacy and ESL services are currently funded through different mechanisms at the provincial level. ESL was not transferred to OTAB, but remained the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Training, and Citizenship. ESL/literacy was traditionally part of ESL programming in Ontario. However, in the past, close links between ESL and literacy programs at the provincial and local levels made it easier to draw upon expertise in both fields and to integrate programming. The lack of coordination has resulted in increased pressure on literacy providers to meet needs of non-English-speaking Ontarians.

Niagara Region providers point out an increasing need to address literacy skills among second language populations as there continues to be a large movement of new Canadians and refugees into the area. Some of the immigrants

> are lacking basic formal training in their mother tongue. Although literacy training has traditionally addressed the anglophone population, the reality of the Niagara region is one of a multiethnic and multinational society and the resulting diversity of need does impinge significantly on literacy training.

Similarly, Peel Region is a primary reception centre for newcomers:

> While 25% of Peel residents represent a mother tongue other than English and French in 1993, by 2001 this percentage will increase to 30%. The additional language/literacy needs of the ESL learner puts a huge strain on the region's literacy community.

The Peterborough County profile reports that "Half of Trent Valley Literacy Association's clients are immigrants."

In Hamilton-Wentworth, a number of social service agencies identified the need for options for immigrants living in the area who are either illiterate in their own language or have very low English language skills.

12. Families

A need for increased attention to family literacy is identified in 5 LCPP profiles. For example, the Niagara profile discusses the need for family literacy programming. It points out that many disadvantaged youth who drop out of school have poor future opportunities due to a lack of marketable work skills. The problem is compounded when they start families of their own:

> The intergenerational effects of low literacy place the children of these families in a cycle of illiteracy, resulting in poor expectations for school achievement and potential failure.

Programs aimed at work-related training are not accessible to poor, single mothers and don't address the needs of the family unit. What are needed are family literacy programs which

> address the literacy needs of young families, so that parents can actively foster literacy in their children. Initiatives must be directed to parents and children as a family unit.

In East Parry Sound, a parenting group identified "a large number of children who are at risk of developing only a small part of their human potential." One of the needs of the children is "to develop the prerequisite literacy and numeracy."

In Iroquois Falls, providers state that they

> could be working more with the children in our community area schools. Providing assistance to those who are struggling with reading and writing skills will prove successful in the long run.

In the Frontenac County profile, the Frontenac, Lennox and Addington RCSS Board describes the Open Book Program in family literacy. It is offered in a 'high risk' area of North Kingston "to break the cycle of low literacy:"

> In the program parents and caregivers of pre-school children are targeted and offered academic upgrading in all subject areas at all levels of instruction in one-to-one or small group learning formats while their children attend pre-school or receive child care. The program creates a partnership between home and school; children are given a 'head start' and their parents are given tools to improve the quality of their own and their families' lives.

Table 3: Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

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(46 of 59 profiles listed local gaps)

The following are twelve characteristics of a seamless system of literacy services--drawn from the LCPP profiles themselves. The number listed by each category indicates the communities which have recorded the absence of a characteristic and the desire to address the gap.

1. High quality programs (22 profiles)

High quality programs with the following characteristics:

- a rich base of resources and learning materials,
- a formal curriculum,
- counselling and client advocacy services,
- bridging to higher-level programs,
- flexible patterns of study,
- culturally specific strategies and culturally sensitive materials,
- job search skills integrated in the curriculum as required,
- strong program and student evaluation practices,
- appropriately small learning groups and individualized curricula,
- distance education strategies where appropriate,
- tutors, where they are present, have various skill levels.

Table 3: Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

Table 3: Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

(continued)

2. Program funding (19 profiles)

Adequate, consistent and long-term funding which addresses unmet needs in the community and which allows:

- response to needs as they arise;
- program stability in terms of staffing, course availability, practitioner training, location and facilities, and resource materials;
- long-term programming with smooth bridging of learners;
- community perception of on-going services.

3. Outreach, information and referral (5 profiles)

A coordinated community strategy of outreach, provision of information on literacy options, and referral to appropriate programs.

4. Assessment (12 profiles)

Agreement among providers on comparable assessment tools, standards and results--thereby freeing students from repeated tests and assessments, and permitting consistent and streamlined provision of literacy services and supports to them.

5. Movement of students (4 profiles)

Coordination by providers of program offerings, schedules and intake and exit procedures--enabling adults to move easily among programs in the community, based upon individual training plans.

6. Tracking and follow-up (4 profiles)

A community-wide system of tracking and follow-up of adult students to ensure timely support for them and to prevent their "falling through the cracks" of institutional mandates.

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Table 3: Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

Table 3: Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

(continued)

7. **Learning recognition (2 profiles)**

   A system of documentation and recognition of learning which is accepted by all providers and which allows adults to easily build upon prior learning.

8. **Shared terminology (8 profiles)**

   Adoption by all providers in the community of a shared terminology for, and understanding of: program names, levels of attainment, learning outcomes and forms of recognition or accreditation. This facilitates movement of students and communication among providers.

9. **Coordination (8 profiles)**

   Close coordination and collaboration among the literacy programs and services in a community on the planning, development and promotion of literacy services.

10. **Tutor Support (4 profiles)**

    Training and supports for tutors which enable them to play an effective role in programs.

11. **Community involvement (6 profiles)**

    Involvement of the public and of community organizations in support for effective provision of literacy services.

12. **Professional development (4 profiles)**

    Training for literacy practitioners which enables them to provide professional, effective services for adults and to maintain the Core Quality Standards for Literacy Programs.

C. Gaps in Local Literacy Systems

A total of 46 of the profiles referred to one or more gaps in the coordination or integration of their local literacy programs and services. Table 3 summarizes the references, organized according to characteristics of what would be an "ideal" local literacy system--drawn from the profiles themselves.

The twelve characteristics represent an initial vision of a coordinated and integrated local system to deliver literacy education. They stand to be modified and expanded as the community planning process continues into its second year.

One category of gaps in local literacy systems concerns funding. This is an area of concern for 19 of the 59 profiles. Given its significance, it is considered separately, below.

1. Coordination and Integration

There are a variety of stakeholders in the effort to improve the coordination and integration of local literacy systems. Business and industry are vitally concerned. For example, the Iroquois Falls profile reports that "Abitibi Price stated there was a gap in communication with the industrial world and the educational world and within the educational system itself." Representatives of the company went on to suggest that

> a better tracking system is needed which should include all aspects of educational training from basic literacy to high school to college courses. This should be readily available and should follow a person from one program to another.

In many areas, elements of a seamless local literacy system already exist, or are in active development. A number of them are described, above, in the section entitled "Community-wide Integration of Services."

Another example is the work of Mohawk College, in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, which was one of the first in the college system to implement a Prior Learning Assessment model to recognize learning.

Open Learning Network in the Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) area and the Literacy Providers of Perth-Huron are jointly working on what the LLEO profile calls

> a system of documenting and recognizing the learning that takes place in literacy programs by providing learners with proof of their learning which is acceptable to all educators in colleges, school boards and community-based literacy programs.

The profiles of Tri-County and Prescott-Russell Counties describe the work of the Tri-County Literacy Council in developing an Inventory of Adult Assessment Tools. It is designed to gather information from the literacy community regarding the type of assessment tools used by practitioners. It examines their effectiveness and user-friendliness.

The North Eastern Ontario Network describes the "Literacy Opportunities in Ontario North" (LOON) project. It addresses the professional development needs of Ontario literacy practitioners through means of distances education. It involves a wide partnership of literacy providers and NEON.

2. Adequate, Consistent and Long-Term Funding

In all, nineteen profiles highlight the issue of funding. For example, the London/Middlesex profile explains that while the needs in the area are apparent, the source of funding to respond to them is not:

> The difficulty currently faced by London and area adult literacy programs lies not with identification of needs but with inadequate funding to provide the necessary programming to meet those needs.

Fourteen profiles identify waiting lists for entry into programs--indicating a mismatch of funding with demand--as a significant barrier to participation in literacy programs. Peel Region providers highlight this condition:

> The number of available literacy and upgrading programs in Peel is woefully inadequate to the size of our client base. Waiting lists at virtually every provider testify to insufficient numbers of available programs - particularly full-time programs. Agency personnel are frequently reluctant to refer overflow clientele to other, equally over-subscribed literacy trainers.

Waiting lists are particularly significant in the delivery of literacy services. That is, adults with literacy needs tend to be more reluctant to come forward than other clients of the education and training system, and are more adversely affected by long delays. The providers of Wellington/Guelph state:

> The economic climate does not allow these programs to function adequately. Some programs have long waiting lists, which can be discouraging for participants.

The providers of Scarborough and East York report a situation in which it is the identification of priorities for funding in literacy are as important as the level of funding. They refer to a local school board which:

> may move resources from the tutoring to classroom programs, not because of the decline of need for the one-to-one type of programming but because of the overwhelming pressure for classroom programs in this economy.

Peel providers point to the effects of yearly allocations and associated funding deadlines:

> All too frequently funding deadlines drive academia. More realistic lead-time for implementation of programs is necessary. The recruitment and/or selection of staff, organization of materials and curriculum, finalizing of space arrangements and recruitment of students, all require sufficient lead time to accomplish successfully.

Elgin County providers identify the impact of lack of long-term commitment to funding over time:

> Consistency of funding is a critical factor which must be examined. Instability of funding has a negative impact on service providers and their constituent populations. This severely impacts on the ability of the community to develop a planned response to needs as they arise. Lack of consistency in funding also impacts on the level of awareness of programmes within the community. Potential learners may be reluctant to enter programmes if they are offered on a short term basis.

Many new developments in literacy depend on short-term project funding. Lambton providers describe the way in which this imparts a sense of impermanence to literacy services in the eyes of local agencies in the community:

> Although we are constantly networking and doing outreach in the outer areas of Lambton County, our programs still seem new and foreign, even to groups we depend on for partnerships, such as social workers. There seems to be a preference for continuous service instead of that which is project-based. Community agencies are aware of this attitude and are subsequently often discouraged from becoming involved with projects.

IV. Conclusion

The Literacy Community Planning Process profiles summarized here are rich in information on the needs of adults in communities across Ontario for literacy services and the ways that literacy providers are responding to them. The profiles indicate priorities and directions for OTAB, the literacy field and other stakeholders in the development of literacy programming.

The profiles represent the product of only one year out of what will be an on-going process of planning of literacy services in Ontario. In 1994/95, the committees will continue their work, focusing this time on particular gaps in literacy programming and coordination which have been locally identified as having the highest priority for action. The reports of the second year of LCPP will concentrate on describing these gaps, the plans to address them, and the progress made to date (as of the end of February, 1995).

The development of the local boards will be accompanied by new local planning processes. This means that the future of the particular process called "LCPP" is not clear. It may well be incorporated within a more inclusive process, covering the whole of the education and training system. However, whatever the name or scope of the process, literacy providers and networks will be called upon to play an important role in it.

Several profiles pointed out the costs of community planning for organizations which are involved in it. The providers of the London/Middlesex area point out that "the coordination and cooperation to do a community profile and community planning have real costs in time." Like London-area providers, the literacy organizations in Sault Ste. Marie found that the process had "significant costs in time and effort."

However, the Sault providers go on to say that LCPP led to "significant understanding" among the participants. They "experienced new insight into the magnitude of the literacy planning process."

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Appendix A: LCPP Profiles Submitted: 1993/94

Central Region

East York and Scarborough
City of North York
City of Toronto
Cities of York and Etobicoke
Halton Region
Peel Region
Simcoe County
York Region

Eastern Region

Durham Region
Frontenac County
Haliburton County
Hastings and Prince Edward Counties
Lanark County
Leeds and Grenville County
Lennox and Addington County
Ottawa-Carleton
Northumberland County
Peterborough County
Renfrew County
Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry (Tri-county) and Prescott-Russell Counties
Victoria County
Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) *
Literacy Ontario Central South (LOCS) *

Northern Region

Atikokan
Dryden
East Algoma
East Parry Sound/South River
Espanola
Fort Frances
Iroquois Falls/Cochrane
Kapuskasing
Kenora/Lake of the Woods
Kirkland Lake
Manitoulin Island
Muskoka
North Bay
North Algoma/Wawa
Red Lake
Sault Ste. Marie
Schreiber
South Temiskaming/New Liskeard
Sturgeon Falls
Sudbury
Superior North
Thunder Bay
Timmins
West Parry Sound
Literacy Northwest *
North Eastern Ontario Network (NEON) *

Western Region

Brant County
Bruce-Grey
Elgin County
Windsor-Essex County
Haldimand-Norfolk
Hamilton-Wentworth
Kent County
Huron-Perth
Lambton
London-Middlesex
Niagara
Oxford County
Waterloo Region
Guelph-Wellington

(* A regional literacy network)

Appendix B: Literacy Networks

Regional Networks

- Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton-Wentworth
- Halton Adult Learning Network
- Literacy Link Eastern Ontario
- Literacy Link Niagara
- Literacy Network of Durham Region
- Literacy Northwest
- Literacy Ontario Central South
- Literacy South Central
- Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy
- Northeastern Ontario Literacy Network
- Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy
- Project READ Literacy Network (Waterloo Region)
- Simcoe Literacy Network
- Southwestern Ontario Adult Literacy Network

Local Networks

- Literacy Alliance of North Bay
- Literacy Coalition of Thunder Bay
- London Literacy Network
- Peel Adult Learning Network
- Sudbury Literacy Network
- Windsor-Essex Literacy Coalition/Training Hotline